

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT – 2015
HISTORIC MARBOLD FARMSTEAD ASSOCIATION

The Historic Marbold Farmstead Association had a very successful 2015 due to our dedicated members, volunteers, supporters, donors, visitors and board of directors. We are thankful that so many see the value of this iconic farmstead where, as our mission states, we dedicate ourselves to the creation of a living history farm. Another aspect of our mission is educating the public about the historical significance of this farm, the immigration story it tells, and farming practices and farm life circa 1890. Finally, our mission includes restoring, rebuilding and repairing the house and buildings that made up this farmstead. We feel we have made great strides in accomplishing our mission of education and restoration.

Fundraising efforts have continued and will continue to be paramount in moving our mission and goals forward. Together with our members, supporters and volunteers the association participated in the following fundraising efforts: Sanert spring farm auction, Mason City IGA cookout, corporate sponsorships, Commemorative Brick Campaign, the Marbold Farmstead Antique Show, Readers' Theatre – "One Grand Old Lady," trivia night, A Landmark Dinner and "A Very Vintage Christmas – Tea & Style Show." We are proud to say these events have made a huge difference in our treasury.

Educational opportunities offered by the farmstead were as follows: 2nd Sundays at the Farmstead, where we provided two excellent agricultural programs, history of the farmstead and Marbold family, and tours of the property. In May we hosted "Farm Day," where Greenview Elementary second and fifth graders came to the farm for hands-on learning. Prior to visiting the farm, the fifth graders were given classroom instruction about surveying, surveying equipment and Abraham Lincoln the surveyor. The final day brought them to the farm, where they were able to utilize their skills with equipment similar to what Lincoln used. Both the fifth and second grade class groups were guided to stations in the house and outdoors, where students were shown a display of items relating to life on the farm, had a chance to hear the history of the Marbolds, churn butter, grind corn, learn about household objects from the late 1800's, participate in gunny sack races and hear about immigrants who came to a new country. The students were excited learners and we hope we have planted seeds leading them to love this historic site.

Restoration has been the most visual aspect of the farm to those who drive by on Route 29. The board of directors made the decision to allot money specifically for repairs, restoration and rebuilding of the north annex. This area consists of the wash house, dairy room below, smokehouse, carriage house and summer kitchen. Beginning in September, the wash house underwent major changes, clearing of debris from the dairy room, tearing down and rebuilding walls, masonry tuck-pointing, foundation work, and rebuilding the floor and roof. We now have a secure and sound wash house. Windows remain the final item to enclose this structure. The smokehouse is a work currently in progress. This brick building was extremely dilapidated and has required major improvements. The east and west walls had to be taken down and completely rebuilt. Concrete blocks were used to fortify these walls but will make the smokehouse sturdy and able to withstand the elements once again. The blocks will be plastered over to recreate the look of the past. The smokehouse roof, along with windows, will be added in the days ahead. Like the wash house and dairy room, this service building is unique and we have the great opportunity to explain and educate our guests about each of them.

By summer of 2016, we anticipate the carriage house and summer kitchen will be rebuilt and the roof over the entire north annex will be finished. Although the buildings of the north annex will not be complete on the inside, the outside will once again reveal a complex of service buildings that both men and women used in their daily life on the farmstead. The transformation will be outstanding.

The pump house, located on the far south side of the property, is another outbuilding that has undergone some repair work. New boards and painting are among the work, but yet to come is a new roof and windows. The pump and holding tank are still present and at some point will be another feature for our visitors to observe.

Another aspect of restoration has been ongoing mowing and tending of the grounds, as well as clearing and improving the property: unwanted or undesirable trees have been cut down and removed, two barn foundations made visible, an outdoor education center cleared, and new plant life added to the site. We now offer a butterfly garden and a wetlands area that will make another educational option for our guests. We routinely receive compliments about the physical appearance of our grounds. We know it comes through our dedicated volunteers who commit their time, effort and equipment for this work.

What lies ahead for 2016? The directors are making plans for events to be held at the farmstead, both educational and fundraising. Something new will be a summerfest in July, where we will offer a day of fun, food, music, and education (a civil war encampment). Farm Day for Greenvew Elementary students will be repeated. An additional goal is to provide a day camp for students in grades 1 through 6 in August.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Devin Hunter from the University of Illinois Springfield has agreed to become involved with our project. Dr. Hunter will utilize the farmstead in his history classes, and has provided us a graduate student who has not only volunteered at the farmstead but will intern with us. We are excited that Dr. Hunter will also begin drafting the application for the National Register of Historic Places for our project, a valuable designation. Dr. Hunter and UIS students will be beneficial in validating our project to the public.

The association diligently pursues grant funds that provide additional support for restoration. In July we were privileged to receive \$5,000 from the Brandt Foundation, the charitable-giving arm of BRANDT Consolidated, Inc., a now-global agriculture company. These funds will be spent on the north annex, specifically the windows which will need to be hand-crafted due to their unusual size. Application was made in November to Landmarks Illinois, the state's leading voice for historic preservation. We recently received word we were awarded a \$2,000 matching grant from their Preservation Heritage Fund. These funds have been ear-marked for the brick masonry work for the smokehouse. We are grateful to the Brandt Foundation and Landmarks Illinois for the financial support.

So much that has happened since the association purchased the property in March of 2012. While one can see changes and transformation thus far, and though it is exciting to see, we have much more to do. We continue to seek volunteers, members, supporters and donors to maintain and carry on the mission and goals we have established and work toward. We encourage you to continue to volunteer your time and help us make plans for the future. There is no place like the Marbold Farmstead and we want to make that known. It is a "place that matters."

Charlotte Wohler, President